United Nations S/2018/850

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 September 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 17 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the fifty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2401 (2018) (S/2018/845).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again expresses its regret that the authors of the Secretary-General's reports and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) continue to take a negative and politicized approach to the Syrian Arab Republic and its institutions. They continue to fall into the same errors involving major departures from their mandates, and continue to wilfully disregard the observations and concerns expressed by the Syrian Arab Republic about previous Secretariat reports.

The Syrian Arab Republic has concluded that the present report, like its predecessors, has nothing whatsoever to do with the real humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, or with what Syrians need to alleviate their suffering and harsh conditions and reinforce their resilience. The present report, like the previous one, has been used to distract international efforts from the most important element of humanitarian support for Syrians, which is combating terrorism in Syria and eliminating its sources of funding. Unfortunately, the present United Nations report is devoted to promoting the policies and agendas of certain States on the Security Council and their proxies in the region, which only has the effect of damaging the reputation and credibility of the United Nations as a whole.

The Syrian Arab Republic finds it extremely bizarre and reprehensible that the authors of these reports should continue to neglect to alert the global public to the low level of international funding being provided to the Syrian Arab Republic. They deliberately minimize the catastrophic effects of the limited amount of funding, the fact that certain donors are linking funding to political conditions that are incompatible with humanitarian action, and the negative impact all this has on the lives and humanitarian situation of Syrians. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the provision of adequate and unconditional support is a prerequisite for any effective implementation of the humanitarian response plan for Syrians, especially in areas liberated from terrorism to which civilians are beginning to return.

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The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its principled position condemning the method and approach of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the authors of the present report. In particular, they continue to deliberately neglect to document the numbers of civilian casualties in Raqqah governorate in Syria, or the massive destruction suffered by that unfortunate city as a result of bombing by the "international coalition" and separatist militias allied with it. The Syrian Arab Republic wonders if OHCHR assessed whether or not operations in the city of Raqqah and elsewhere complied with considerations of proportionality, precaution and discrimination. Has OHCHR documented any of the well-known crimes and massacres committed in Syria by the "coalition", certain Western States and Turkey? Has it documented the logistical support provided by members of the "White Helmets" terrorist organization to members of the Nusrah Front and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organizations in the North and the South of Syria? Members of that organization have fought alongside the latter two terrorist organizations and staged a fresh farcical theatrical production so that they can claim that chemical weapons were used in Idlib, with a view to misleading world opinion and creating pretexts and rationales for Western attacks on the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian Arab Republic is mystified by the degree to which the authors of the report fall into line behind the campaigns being conducted by well-known Western States regarding the situation in a particular region of Syria. The most recent is the situation in Idlib governorate, where thousands of terrorists and foreign mercenaries deployed with the support of known international and regional actors are besieging that region and committing terrorism against its people.

With respect to Idlib, the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that it has become an open secret how assiduously the authors of the report are toeing the line and complying with the dictates of certain Western States that are members of the Security Council, especially when it comes to the distorted picture they continue to give of the efforts launched by the Syrian State in response to the pleas of civilians in Idlib governorate to be liberated from terrorism. Those efforts are in fact the only thing that can guarantee the return of civic stability to that governorate and the return of displaced persons and refugees to their normal lives. Such efforts are the only way to make sure that humanitarian aid intended for those civilians is delivered on a continuous basis, which is exactly what happened in other parts of Syria previously liberated from terrorism.

The Syrian Arab Republic, in keeping with its exclusive constitutional obligation and responsibility to guarantee the security, safety and protection of Syrian citizens, and its commitment to the relevant United Nations resolutions, and in particular Security Council resolution 2253 (2015), is determined to liberate Idlib governorate and other parts of Syria where terrorists or any foreign elements are deployed illegally. It will do so in full compliance with the principles of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law. It will provide safe corridors, safe havens and basic humanitarian assistance to the citizens of that governorate. That is something that should be supported by the Secretariat and the member States, because it will restore security and safety to the lives of the citizens of that governorate.

The Syrian Arab Republic regrets the unwarranted acceptance by the authors of the farcical performances, allegations and fabrications being staged and spread by certain Western States and their proxy terrorist organization, the "White Helmets", regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons in Idlib. That has all been done in order to create pretexts for launching a new attack against the Syrian Arab Republic as part of a flagrant attempt to pressure the Syrian Government, engage in political blackmail, and prolong the terrorist war against Syria.

In that regard, the Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Secretariat to condemn threats being made by members of the Security Council and other States to launch an attack against the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic. It calls on the Secretariat to demand that those States stop violating the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law that prohibit attacks or threats thereof against the sovereignty of Member States of the United Nations.

The Syrian Arab Republic once again expresses its rejection of the continuing illegitimate and irresponsible practice on the part of the authors of the report and supposed OHCHR officials of using the term "non-State armed opposition" to refer to the ISIL and Nusrah Front terrorist organizations, even though the authors are well aware that those two organizations appear on the Security Council lists relating to the Al-Qaida terrorist organization and associated individuals and entities. Those two organizations have links with numerous terrorist groups deployed in Syria, and in particular the "White Helmets" terrorist organization, which is an intelligence and logistical tool being used by certain Western States to support the Nusrah front and ISIL terrorist organizations. In particular, it is the proxy that has been assigned the task of fabricating theatrical performances to mislead global public opinion with respect to allegations relating to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. In addition, members of that organization take active part alongside those two terrorist organizations in committing terrorist acts against Syrians and their country's institutions.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the Secretariat, in its reports on the humanitarian situation in Syria, should rely on experts who are capable of choosing their terminology with neutrality and in a manner consistent with legal, professional and objective considerations. Otherwise, Secretariat reports on the implementation of United Nations resolutions will turn into mouthpieces for the wishes of certain Western States that have adopted extremist positions with respect to the Syrian State.

The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its call on the United Nations Secretariat, the Security Council and the Member States of the Organization to exert pressure on the States and regional entities that are imposing unilateral coercive economic measures against the Syrian Arab Republic, including in the very sectors most important to supporting and ensuring the basic needs of Syrians, such as health, education, energy, electricity, and so on. Such measures should be lifted immediately. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the continued imposition of those measures is the primary obstacle to ensuring the basic needs of the Syrian people, improving their humanitarian and living conditions, and putting in place the necessary conditions for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes and the restoration of normal life. The Syrian Arab Republic regards the failure by the authors of the report to address this important issue as, at the very least, something that might be described as "irresponsible conduct and a clear sign of lack of professionalism".

In the report under consideration, the authors endeavour to blur mandates and competences by discussing the political situation and by using numerous politicized terms. The Syrian Arab Republic rejects that approach. Such terms have nothing to do with the authors' mandate or the topic of the report, which is supposed to be about the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian Arab Republic regrets that the authors of the report, in conformity with the instructions of certain Western States, are misguidedly promoting cross-border assistance. Such assistance has proven ineffective and unable to guarantee delivery to the rightful civilian recipients, and therefore, one way or another, should be regarded as indirect support for the terrorists who are seizing it, thereby helping those terrorists continue their terrorist operations in Syria.

The Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to stop issuing these monthly reports, which many see as a waste of time, money and human resources, and replace them with quarterly reports that are written in a professional and credible manner.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative